



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
SENIOR SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
CLASS XI
BIRTH
A. J. Cronin

SUMMARY

This chapter is an extract from A.J Cronin's novel 'The Citadel'. This extract describes how a young doctor revives a child that is born lifeless.

Joe Morgan and his wife are a middle-aged couple. They have been married for 20 years, but have not got any child so far. Now Mrs. Morgan is expecting her first child. Both her husband and her mother are feeling very nervous because the delivery of the child is going to be before time. A young doctor named, Andrew is called in. The doctor has to put in hard labour in the delivery of the child. When the child is born, it seems to be still-born. This shock could be too much for the Morgans to bear.

While the doctor is attending to the mother, the nurse places the baby under the bed among dirty newspapers. After assuring himself that the mother is safe, the doctor looks for the baby. Finding it under the bed, he at once pulls it out. It was a boy, perfectly formed. The body was warm but was not breathing. At once the doctor sets to revive the child's breath. After half an hour's terrible effort, he is at last successful. He thanks God and hands the child to the nurse.

TITLE

The title *Birth* is appropriate for the chapter as it revolves around the theme of bringing a young one to life. Similarly, its protagonist Andrew was a newly qualified doctor who worked as an assistant to Dr. Edward Page. Despite his less experience, he went to help his friend at the midnight hour. In his efforts to revive the child's life and at last, a miracle occurred. In this way, Andrew not only saved the life of a new born infant, but it also helped him to keep up the trust of his friend. This makes Andrew feel a sense of achievement and a sense of doing something 'real' in Blaenelly. Therefore, the chapter not only talks about the 'birth' of a young one but also the 'birth' of Andrew as a doctor.

CHARACTERS

Dr. Andrew Manson – newly qualified, takes a job as assistant to Dr. Page in a small mining town. On arrival, he finds to his surprise that Page is partly paralyzed and will never work again. This means Dr. Andrew Manson will have to do most of the clinic's work in this mining town at a meagre pay.

The Midwife – an experienced nurse to help in the birth of the child. The midwife and Andrew are contrasting personalities. The midwife is a foil to Andrew. She feels hopeless, resigned, helpless, fearful and untrained. On the other hand, Andrew proves to be more optimistic, diligent, efficient, self-sufficient, spontaneous and well-trained.

Joe Morgan – a well-built person in forties, lives in a small Welsh town of Blaenelly, works as a driller at the mines, he has been married for 20 years, but have not got any child so far.

Mrs. Morgan – wife of Joe Morgan, is expecting her first child, both her husband and her mother are feeling very nervous because the delivery of the child is going to be before time.

Christine – a school teacher, Andrew falls in love and contemplates marrying her.

Morgan's mother – a tall, grey-haired woman of nearly seventy.

Answer the following questions in 30-40 words.

1. Joe Morgan was eager to be a father, yet he chose to stay out till the child was born. Why?
2. Why was Dr. Andrew dull and listless as he accompanied Joe?
3. What do you think of Mrs. Morgan's mother from the story?
4. Andrew was engaged in a long, harsh struggle, the result of which was only horrifying. Comment.
5. In which predicament did Andrew find himself? What did he finally do?
6. How did he revive the mother?
7. In what state did Andrew find the newborn child?
8. What treatment was given to resuscitate the child? What was the result?
9. How did the midwife and Mrs. Morgan's mother react when the child was resuscitated?
10. Andrew's visit to the Morgans gave him pleasure and satisfaction that he had not earlier achieved. Justify.

Answer the following questions in 100-120 words:

Q1. Draw a character sketch of Dr. Andrew.

Q2. "I have done something, oh, God! I've done something real at last." Why does Andrew say this? What does it mean?

Ans. Andrew was fresh from the medical school. He was still working as an assistant to Dr. Edward Page in Blaenelly. He had yet to prove his merit. He got a chance soon to test all his learning. He knew that a doctor's job was to save life. He got a golden opportunity unexpectedly one evening. He was called upon to supervise the delivery case of Susan Morgan. He waited all night. But he was horrified to find the newborn baby almost lifeless. The mother was also collapsing. He first saved the mother's life by giving an injection. Then he turned to the stillborn baby. He applied treatment he had once seen at school. He dipped the baby first in warm water and then in icy cold water. His effort was crowned with success. The child began to gasp and then cry. Andrew had supreme satisfaction because he had saved two lives.